

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace page 1, lines 11 to 23 with the following amended lines:

Each of the fuel rods comprise[[s]] a rectilinear cylindrical tubular cladding that~~have~~ has an axial length that is much greater than the diameter of the cross-section. Generally, the fuel rods have a length greater than 4 m and a diameter in the order of 10 mm. The fuel rods comprise, at the inner side of the tubular cladding a column of nuclear fuel pellets which are stacked one on top of the other in the axial direction of the cladding which is closed, in a tight manner, at the axial ends thereof by means of plugs. In its operating position within a fuel assembly inside the core of the nuclear reactor, the fuel rod is arranged with the axis thereof vertical so that a first closure plug of the rod is at the lower portion thereof and constitutes the lower plug and the second plug which is located at the upper portion of the fuel rod in the operating position, constitutes the upper plug.